

Israel bans doctor from travel

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel has prohibited travel abroad for a prominent Israeli Arab doctor who acted as an intermediary with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). Ahmad Tibi, a gynaecologist, said Friday he had planned to go to Egypt with his family this week but received a three-month travel ban from the interior ministry which said his trip could harm state security. Tibi said he was to have met senior Egyptian officials including Osama Al Baz, political adviser to President Hosni Mubarak. "Whoever protests at prohibitions on Jews leaving other countries can't believe this way against me and my people especially when I am an Israeli citizen. If I did something illegal, put me on trial," Tibi told Reuters. "I believe that they thought I was possibly going to meet the PLO but it was private visit," said Tibi, who was given a two-month travel ban last July. Tibi was named as middleman in alleged illegal contacts last year between former Science Minister Ezer Weizman and the PLO on Israel's proposal to hold elections in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Tibi, 33, has also mediated in Israeli-Arab contacts for prisoner exchanges.

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Israel approves Palestinian bank

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Israeli military authorities have granted permission for the establishment of the first Palestinian-owned commercial bank in the occupied territories, the bank's investor said Friday. The move follows statements by officials that Israel was considering steps to aid "economic development" in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip and make the 1.75 million Arabs there less dependent on jobs at the Jewish state. Kamal Hassounah, a businessman in Hebron, said he received army approval for the bank this week, six years after applying, and would meet Israeli central bank officials soon to discuss conditions of operations. "I think there is some change in Israeli policy. Before they refused to give any big projects approval for the West Bank. They understood we now need this bank because we cannot develop our economy without one," Hassounah told Reuters. "This is the first Palestinian-owned bank in the occupied territories since 1967," he said. Israel allowed the Amman-based Cairo-Amman Bank to open branches in the West Bank in 1986.

Price: Jordan 100 fils; Saudi Arabia 1.50 riyals; UAE 1.50 dirhams

Bush orders Egypt's \$7b debt cancelled

WASHINGTON (AP) — President George Bush Friday ordered forgiveness of Egypt's \$7-billion in military debts as a reward for the country for its cooperation with the U.S. efforts against Iraq. The president cited U.S. national security interests and said the action was necessary for "the success of Desert Shield," the code name for the U.S. military operation starting S7 to free Kuwait. Bush's action, which is to go into effect Saturday, directing the Treasury Department to reduce the debt to zero, puts into effect an 11-year foreign aid package that Heston has just signed.

More than 250 Soviets leave Iraq

BAGHDAD (AP) — More than 250 Soviets left Iraq Friday and Soviet Deputy Premier Igor Belousov met with Iraqi leaders seeking an agreement to terminate Soviet companies' contracts with Iraq, officials reported. The Soviets left aboard an Aeroflot Ilyushin Il-86 airliner shortly after midnight (2100 GMT Thursday). About 1,000 others will be sent by Soviet and Iraqi air lines by Jan. 10, five days before the deadline set by the United Nations for Iraq to withdraw all its troops from Kuwait or face military action.

"We are taking action by U.S.-led multinational force. Soviet diplomats," Belousov said. Belousov met with Iraqi officials to discuss ways of developing relations between Iraq and the Soviet Union with Hammadi, who is also in charge of economic relations with foreign countries.

Soviet deputies concerned over Gulf

YORK (AP) — Goodfellow, the Soviet parliament has urged a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis but De Niro has reiterated the country's support of Goodfellow's resolution for the U.N. resolution on the issue of force to drive Iraq out of Kuwait. On the last day of its session on Jan. 10, the federal government, programme of the People's Congress of the People's Deputies approved a resolution that affirmed "support for relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions which were adopted after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait," according to the state and in Associated Press TASS. Legislators also called on Iraq "to display high standards of responsibility for the destiny of their homeland and international peace and to fulfill demands of the international community based on the rules of civilised life and legality." TASS said the resolution expressed support for the policies and decisions taken by the Kremlin leadership.

Americans can dial for Gulf protest details

NEW YORK (R) — For \$10 a month, Americans can get an up-to-date news service on protests and reaps a donation for the Coalition to Stop U.S. Military Intervention in the Middle East. The coalition says the phone number, which has been operating about 10 days, has raised thousands of dollars.

Alaska pipeline security beefed up

ANCHORAGE (R) — Security innocent of the United States' transited its pipeline because of possible attacks by backers of Iraq, officials said. The threat of war in the Gulf has led officials to evaluate security for the 1,300-kilometre pipeline that delivers a rented tank of oil a day, a federal official said at least one tanker of oil.

Lilley, who has made a series of trips to the Arctic ocean to the gulf of hallowell, said the pipeline should end

Israeli terror group attacks Palestinians, vows more assaults

Combined agency dispatches

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM — A Jewish vigilante group that claimed responsibility for shooting three Palestinians in a roadside ambush warned it would launch more attacks on Arabs, an Israeli spokesman said Friday.

Reporter Roni Shaked of the Yedioth Ahronoth daily said an anonymous caller told him an hour after the shooting Thursday night that "this is the first activity of the group, and there are going to be more actions, and much worse than this."

Relatives of the victims and Israeli liberals blamed Israel's right-wing government for the attack, saying its lax attitude towards Jewish militants encouraged violence against Arabs.

The shooting attack came a day after three Jewish settlers were freed after serving less than seven years of a life term for killing three Palestinians in a shooting spree and maiming two West Bank mayors with car bombs. They were greeted as heroes by fellow settlers.

Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Arens condemned Thursday's shooting as a "criminal act" and said the assailants

punished." Avi Pazner, a spokesman for Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, called the attack "shocking."

One of the victims, 30-year-old Faisal Amer, was in serious but stable condition after being shot several times in the chest, leg and abdomen, said a spokesman for Jerusalem's Hadassah hospital.

Amer's 31-year-old sister, Ibtissam, was in stable condition after being shot in the hand. Her nine-month-old daughter, who was hit by shrapnel in the hips, was also stable, Mekel said.

Amer, a physician from the West Bank town of Hebron, was driving his sister and niece home late Thursday when his car was flagged down by a man in army uniform on the main highway between Bethlehem and Hebron, Israel army radio said.

Amer slowed down the car and the man in uniform started shooting with a submachine gun, the report said. When Amer tried to get out of the car, the assailant approached and continued firing until Amer collapsed on the ground.

Ibtissam said the assailant told her that "you will die, and God will not protect you." The assailant fled in a car with yellow

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Israel expects 40,000 emigres this month

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel in December will register the highest monthly total of immigrants in its 42-year history as a result of a surge in Soviet arrivals, an Israeli immigration official said Friday.

Sima Dinitz, head of the quasi-government Jewish Agency, told a news conference that about 35,000 Soviets would be among the 40,000 Jews coming in December, "a record month in the history of immigration in Israel."

He noted, however, that the influx was creating major housing problems and said the government should take over construction to resolve the crisis.

The government expects more than 200,000 immigrants this year, about 90 per cent of the Soviets. The total will be second only to 1949, when more than 239,000 immigrants arrived in the new state.

Soviets have been pouring into Israel since the spring of 1989, when the Soviet Union eased its policy on exit permits.

Dinitz said the pace has accelerated in recent weeks because of increasing uncertainty in the Soviet Union and better transportation arrangements by Israel. The Jewish Agency

assists the Israeli government in transporting and resettling immigrants.

Dinitz said that discussions with newly arrived Soviets showed "the question of lack of stability, the disintegration of the system, is the thing that worries them most."

In addition, he said, Israel has improved its transport arrangements via Budapest, Bucharest and Warsaw.

He said the housing crisis was created because the construction planned by the government had not been carried out.

Dinitz said, for example, that government budgeted for 45,000 new housing units this year, but that only 27,000 had been started. Not a single one of the 15,000 planned prefabricated homes has been erected, he said, and only 950 of 30,000 mobile homes have been moved into place.

He predicted "a difficult situation for the next 10 to 12 months" and said the government should take over construction.

Dinitz said he did not believe the newcomers would have to be housed in tents, as some Israeli officials have said. Instead, he said, Israel will have to make use of "every available space" in the new state.

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(Continued on page 4)

Iran demands U.S. pullout from Gulf, urges regional solution

NICOSIA (Agencies) — Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani warned Friday that the Gulf is in imminent danger of war and urged the United States to pull out troops from the region and let the Gulf states resolve the crisis.

Tehran Radio quoted Rafsanjani as saying in a prayer sermon at Tehran University that both Iraq and the United States should end their "aggression."

"Iran reiterates that the aggression on Kuwait be ended, Iraqi forces return to Iraq and arrogant forces, especially the U.S., who have come to the region on this pretext with dangerous weapons, also end their aggression."

The Iranians have condemned Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait. They have equally denounced the U.S.-led multinational force sent to Saudi Arabia.

"The U.S. forces should end

their aggression and leave the region to its own so that we can solve the region's problems with peace and cooperation," the radio quoted Rafsanjani as saying.

"We pray that both sides come to their senses and there be no bloodshed and mischief in the region," he added.

Iran, Iraq's foe in the 1980-88 Gulf war, has called for a regional solution from the outset of the crisis.

Iran, which has the most powerful army in the region after Iraq, aspires to lead a regional force to police the Gulf, according to earlier statement made by Rafsanjani.

Western analysts believe the Iranians fear that a long-term presence of U.S. forces in the region would throttle those ambitions.

Shaul Bakhash, a history professor in the United States who has written extensively on Iran,

said recently that the Iranians "feel that a regional security arrangement under U.S. auspices would probably mean that Saudi Arabia, and not Iran, would be the favoured country" to lead such a force.

Still locked under a Western arms embargo, Iran is nevertheless engaged in an ambitious effort to rebuild its delapidated military.

Tehran Television Thursday showed off Tehran's latest arms procurement: Advanced Soviet-built SA-6 anti-aircraft missiles for the air wing of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps.

The acquisition of the mobile, radar-guided SA-6s is a big boost for Iran's badly depleted military, which suffers from a chronic shortage of advanced weapons.

The Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) said graduates instructed in use of the weapons system test fired an SA-6 at a military base Thursday.

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PROTEST IN AMMAN: Women waving flags and banners demonstrate in front of the U.N. office in Amman Friday



against the interception by the multinational forces in the Gulf of an Iraq-bound peace ship (See story on page 3)

Iraq and U.S. say no change, no compromise

Combined agency dispatches

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — About 300 European, American and Israeli women held a silent protest Friday against Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip to open an international women's peace conference.

"No compromise on anything," U.S. President George Bush told reporters as a 17-ship American task force headed for the Gulf to bolster the multinational war machine ranged against Iraq.

"Our policy is fixed," said Iraqi Information Minister Latif Al Jassem. He insisted there would be no surprise initiatives either before or after the Jan. 15 U.N. deadline for Baghdad to pull out of Kuwait or face war.

"From our side there is no movement...no flexibility," he told the British Broadcasting Corporation in an interview from Baghdad. There would be "no change between now and a couple of years or three years or 10 years," over Kuwait, he said.

Bush, denying press reports of progress towards breaking the Washington-Baghdad deadlock over a date for a dialogue, said

on Thursday: "There's nothing going on."

Jassem said it was up to the United States to make the first move to start talks. "We are ready for any change in the situation from the American side," he said.

Bush wants to open a dialogue before Jan. 3. He has rejected Iraq's insistence Jan. 12 for meeting U.S. Secretary of State James Baker as too close to the deadline for possible war.

NATO's top general said meanwhile the multi-national "Desert Shield" force in the Gulf will be ready to push Iraq out of Kuwait after Jan. 15 if required.

"I think the forces will be ready if necessary by Jan. 15," U.S. General John Galvin, NATO's supreme allied commander Europe, told journalists Friday as he watched U.S. Army trucks being loaded at Rotterdam aboard ships bound for the Gulf.

A convoy of 17 warships carrying 16,000 forces began leaving the United States on Friday for the Gulf, less than three weeks before the U.N. deadline.

Bush has dismissed reports that the United States is still

Iraqis test-fire new missile, spark alert

Combined agency dispatches

IRAQ FRIDAY test-fired a surface-to-surface missile for the second time this week, shooting it away from multinational forces in Saudi Arabia, the U.S. central command said.

"The firing appeared to be part of an additional testing or training mission," said Casey Mahan, a central command spokesman.

Mahan said the missile landed in Iraq. He could not comment on the alert status of the 300,000 U.S. troops in Operation Desert Shield during the firing. Additional details about the flight path or the kind of missile were not released.

Reporters visiting the hospital ship USNS Mercy said crew members went on a heightened state of alert around noon because of the missile launch, carrying their protective gear against chemical weapons with them.

The Iraqis are believed to have up to 1,000 surface-to-surface missiles of various types, either Soviet-built SS-1 Scud-Bs or Iraqi variants of that weapon.

Baghdad bought about 2,000 Scud-Bs from Moscow during the 1980-88 Gulf war and launched scores during that conflict.

It is not known whether Iraq's missiles are capable of carrying chemical warheads, although there have been reports that they have deployed some chemical warheads with their Scud-Bs.

Spokeswoman for VZGlyad, the company that produces VZGlyad, said a statement would be read before the programme's usual broadcast time to explain why it had been cancelled.

"In essence, the announcement will say the programme was cancelled by the leadership of the state committee for radio and television because of... a difference in opinion over events of the past year," she told Reuters by telephone.

"...A difference between the leadership and the authors of the programme."

"Suicide commandos"

Thousands of Iraqis have been trained as commandos for suicidal attacks against the U.S.-led

coalition.

(Continued on page 5)

TV censors call off Shevardnadze programme

MOSCOW (R) — Broadcasting officials Friday cancelled a television programme about the resignation of Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze.

Alexander Lyubimov, presenter of the popular weekly VZGlyad (View), said the cancellation of Friday's edition was especially troubling at a time when the country was taking a conservative turn.

Shevardnadze, an architect under President Mikhail Gorbachev, resigned last week saying the Soviet Union was heading towards dictatorship. He denounced his critics as "reactionary."

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The Arab World for Maintenance and General Services

Tel: 812702

Look page 7

Middle East News

Arab allies fill front lines, but offensive role unclear

HAFR AL-BATTIN, Saudi Arabia (AP) — The front line arrayed against Iraq is a mixed bag of Arab-Islamic forces whose role in the northern Saudi desert may be merely symbolic.

As the U.N.'s Jan. 15 deadline approaches for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait or face force, it's still not clear what part the Arab forces would play in a potentially bloody offensive.

More than 100,000 Saudis, Egyptians, Syrians, vengeful Kuwaitis and others have joined forces against Iraq.

Forces from Pakistan, Morocco, Bangladesh, Niger and Senegal have planted their flags on Saudi soil. Some contingents are little more than token forces.

Behind them are about 350,000 American, British and French troops with the firepower needed to hammer Iraq.

"If peace doesn't arrive, and if we're ordered by our supreme commanders, we can teach him a lesson he'll never forget," boasted Lt. Gen. Khalid Ben Sultan, a Saudi prince who commands the 115,000-strong Arab-Islamic force.

These are big ifs.

Not all members of the Arab alliance will sound "charge" if the U.S.-led multinational force is ordered into Kuwait.

The Kuwaitis, of course, want their country back, but they won't fight in Iraq.

The Saudis will fight with the United States and its allies if invited by Kuwait. The Egyp-

tians say they will do what the Saudis do.

The Syrians and others have said only that their role here is defensive and to stop aggression.

"It's clear that are varying levels of commitment in terms of willingness to use offensive military action to achieve our objective," U.S. Defense Secretary Dick Cheney acknowledged recently.

What the Arabs will do if Iraq carries out its threat to attack Israel with missiles is another problem. It would be difficult for the Syrians and the Saudis to fight Iraq if it gets into a shoot-out with Israel.

"The Arab states "that really count" are the Saudis and the Egyptians, Cheney said.

The Saudis have a 75,000-strong army and air force; the Egyptians have pledged 10,000 troops, including two armoured divisions.

The Egyptians and Syrians, who have sent an armoured division with their 20,000-man contingent, bring combat experience to the Saudi desert. Both have fought the Israelis and the Syrians have been in action in Lebanon.

But some analysts say the biggest contribution the Arab-Islamic force makes is symbolic — a stand that helps to silence criticism of Western forces occupying a land where Islam's holiest shrines are located.

The military show will be run by the Americans and the British

because they have the experience and the firepower needed to breach Iraq's formidable defences in Kuwait.

The Arab alliance is "a useful show of political solidarity," said Ian Kemp, a military analyst with Jane's Defence Weekly.

"But if it comes to an offensive operation, I don't think they'll play anything but a marginal role. The Americans and the British will play the lead."

Some expect a force of Kuwaitis and Saudis to spearhead the U.S.-British effort as a political gesture.

"This will allow the Arab-Islamic forces say they were the ones who liberated Kuwait City," said Tony Banks, political editor for Jane's.

"But when it comes to real thing, the Americans and the British will bear the brunt of it."

By agreement, no offensive can be launched from Saudi soil without the consent of King Fahd and U.S. President George Bush.

In the defensive configuration, Prince Khalid serves as co-commander of the 28-nation force with Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf, the U.S. commander.

If there's any bloodshed, I can assure you Saudi forces will be the first to spill it," Khalid stressed recently. "If anyone touches my land, you will see vicious soldiers who will do their job well."

Consequently, Baghdad entered a reservation to a decision by the General Assembly's credentials committee to accept the legitimacy of the "so-called delegation of Kuwait."

Kuwait was quick to respond and on Thursday sent its own letter to the secretary-general.

The document, not yet officially released, said Kuwait was entering an official reservation on the Iraqi delegation's credentials because Baghdad was "not a peace-loving regime, had committed crimes against humanity and therefore 'had no place in an organisation'."

The credentials committee has completed its report but its acceptance by the General Assembly was postponed.

Kuwait and Iraq fight over credentials at U.N.

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Kuwait and Iraq closed out the year at the United Nations Thursday by challenging each other's membership in the world body, each writing to the secretary-general about the alleged illegitimacy of the other.

However, neither delegation mentioned any specific action from the General Assembly, whose members in any case would probably reject such requests, officials said.

Iraq, which invaded and occupied Kuwait on Aug. 2, said in its note, released Wednesday, that the "felicitous union produced by the merger of Iraq and Kuwait" made them once again a single state and said the two therefore should be represented by a single U.N. delegation.

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Dozens killed in mystery attack in Somali capital

MOGADISHU (R) — Several dozen people were killed Friday in heavy fighting between government troops and an armed gang who attacked a fuel depot in a northern suburb of the Somali capital, witnesses said.

The extent of damage to the depot is not yet known ... it is not even clear who is fighting whom," one witness told Reuters.

"But the place is littered with dozens of dead bodies, in military fatigues and civilian clothes."

Witnesses said there were about six attackers. State-run Mogadishu Radio said the gang fled, leaving behind a car, rifle, and two hand grenades.

Witnesses said mortars and automatic rifles were used in the fighting at the depot in the

Mogadishu suburb of Argotina. Ambulances with sirens blaring carried wounded soldiers from the battlefield to the government hospital, witnesses said.

A journalist living in the district said security forces had made many arrests, and troops had surrounded the area.

Earlier this week, heavily-armed police and security personnel were combing parts of Mogadishu for arms and explosives after eight policemen were killed in an ambush.

There has been an upsurge of violence in Mogadishu in recent weeks, with several rebel groups intensifying their fight to overthrow President Mohammad Siad Barre, who has ruled since 1969.

Build-up in Gulf hits American rural health

PALISADE, Colorado (AP) — The callup of reservists for the Gulf buildup is striking medical care hard in rural America, leaving some small towns without doctors and forcing retired physicians back to work.

Dr. Victor Hoeftner, 70, was enjoying his retirement last month when his son, Victor C. Hoeftner III, an army national guardsman, was called up for duty in the Gulf.

Now the elder Hoeftner has taken over his son's family practice in this western Colorado community.

The Defense Department won't say how many doctors have been called up, citing security. In addition to the activation of members of the army, navy and air force reser-

ves, the army has begun forcing some retired medical officers back into uniform.

The effect of the callup is quickly felt in small towns, and the indefinite duration of the crisis is adding to the problem, according to rural health experts.

"Are we talking three months, six months or a year?" asked Toby Turner, spokeswoman for the National Rural Health Association in Kansas City.

"Rural health has been in crisis anyway, and losing 50 per cent of your small hospital's staff at one time is just too much of a blow. The military is just filling slots in these units without paying any attention to a medical reservist's role at home."

U.S. mixed signals continue on troop readiness

WASHINGTON (AP) — Could U.S. forces in the Gulf go to war on Jan. 15? Or shortly after Jan. 15? Or not until Feb. 15?

All are prospective strike dates raised by U.S. officials in recent days, as conflicting signals emerge from the administration on whether and when the nation is ready and able to go to war.

President George Bush now says there's been enough talk about the preparedness of U.S. forces.

"I've said all I want to say about readiness," he told reporters Thursday. "I think it would be very useful if from the president and others there were fewer comments about readiness."

Then he proceeded to talk about readiness.

Bush sought to dispel reports, stemming originally from public statements by the deputy U.S. commander in the Gulf, that U.S. forces will not be ready for offensive action until mid-February — a month after the Jan. 15 deadline set by the United Nations for Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait.

"I feel that the situation is exactly where I was told it was going to be at this time," the president said. "Don't believe those reports you're reading," he said of accounts that his military advisers are warning against launching an attack before mid-February.

Bush said he was "very comfortable" with what his aides have told him about the preparedness of the U.S. force, the largest contingent of a multinational force arrayed against Iraq.

The United States now has 300,000 troops in the region; the

force is eventually to grow to 430,000. One side, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the president would not be deterred from launching a strike, if necessary, even if all U.S. troops and equipment are not in place.

Then Cheney himself said that "soon after Jan. 15," the U.S. forces would be "in a position to take military action in conjunction with our allies."

Bush entered the readiness fray on Saturday, stating that he could launch an attack in 10 minutes.

The varying statements caused speculation that the administration was deliberately trying to put Iraq off balance. Fitzwater told reporters that "it never hurts to build in a little uncertainty about what our intentions are as it relates to Jan. 15."

Administration officials have stressed that Jan. 15 is not a strike date, but merely an authorization date.

Asked what message he wanted Iraq to get on the readiness issue, Bush said Thursday, "We are going to fully implement the United Nations resolutions," which include one authorizing use of force.

A senior administration official said, meantime, it has been decided not to talk about readiness any more.

Asked for an indication of which of the various statements represented the real administration position, the official said only, "I would take the president's comments most seriously."

As to Bush's statement that he could go to war in 10 minutes, the official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said, "his is the last word."

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Morocco opens probe into rioting

RABAT (AP) — The Moroccan parliament has created a special commission to investigate nationwide rioting two weeks ago. The commission numbers 25 ruling party and opposition legislators, including two representing the main labour unions that called the Dec. 14 general strike. The 206-member parliament ordered the probe late Thursday after majority members agreed to allow 10 opposition deputies onto the commission. Official sources meanwhile stated that 670 people have been investigated in connection with the disturbances, and the number could rise in coming days.

Courts sentenced at least 87 to stiff jail sentences Tuesday and Wednesday in Tangier, Melknes and Fez. The rioting Dec. 14-15 broke out in several cities in their country during a long-planned general strike by the nation's two largest labour unions. Fez, the country's spiritual and intellectual capital, was the site of the most extensive violence. Soldiers and police intervened as rioters attacked hotels, post offices and a police station. The government has said that five people were killed in the violence in Fez and 127 injured, claim about 30 people were killed.

Warships save sinking Iranian coaster

RAS AL-KHAIMAH (AP) — The Norwegian coast guard cutter Andenes, aided by a French warship, saved a small Iranian coaster from sinking early Friday near the Strait of Hormuz, gateway to the Gulf. The freighter, the Amjad-22, sprang a leak as it was sailing from Dubai to the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas with a cargo of sugar. The Norwegian cutter, which has a crew of 80 volunteers, responded when the Iranians fired six red distress flares. Arild Skram, the cutter's commander, said in a radio conversation that the incident occurred northwest of the port of Mina Saqr in the southern Gulf. He declined to give other details for security reasons. The Andenes is part of the U.S.-led multinational naval force enforcing the United Nations economic embargo against Iraq.

Tunisian Islamic leader sentenced to jail

TUNIS (R) — A Tunis court has sentenced Islamic leader Mohammad Al-Akrout to five months in prison for spreading false news likely to disturb the peace, a spokesman for the Islamic Nahda Movement said. Akrout, a member of the Nahda's 20-strong founding committee, was arrested in October in connection with a speech he recorded on video for distribution among Nahda members. In the speech, he commented on the death of a student shot by police during a demonstration in September. His lawyers said he merely reported the facts of the killing. His arrest was part of the first wave of a crackdown on the Islamic movement, which has no legal status. The Nahda says more than 200 members and sympathizers have been detained in a second wave which started last Sunday.

Two leftist bombers killed in Istanbul

ISTANBUL (R) — Two left-wing extremists trying to plant bombs outside a government office were killed when the devices exploded in their hands, the Anatolian news agency said. The bombs went off on Thursday night as a group of five people planted them in the car park of the state supplies office (DMO) in Istanbul's Kadikoy district. The outlawed group Dev-Sol (Revolutionary Left), which is active mainly in Istanbul, said in telephone calls to newspapers that its members were involved. A third member of the group, a woman, was taken to hospital with serious injuries after the blast, which set vehicles ablaze. Flames spread to the DMO building but were extinguished before they caused major damage. Two other men in the group escaped in a car. Police found five unexploded bombs and two drums of petrol at the scene.

Belgium warns nationals to avoid Gulf

BRUSSELS (R) — Belgium's foreign ministry has warned its nationals to avoid the Gulf region if at all possible and to take precautions if staying there was unavoidable. A statement said that given Iraq's refusal to leave Kuwait, the visiting of countries around a potential war zone could not be seen as risk-free. It said its advice was "a precautionary measure, and does not prejudge possible developments in the situation." It advised what it called common-sense measures. Tourists should not go to the region at all, and families of residents should leave danger zones, at least temporarily. Business travellers should only go there if this was unavoidable, and should limit their stays. Residents should stay only if their presence was professionally essential, it said. Residents and visitors were strongly advised to let the appropriate embassy or consulate know of their exact movements.

Quake hits Iran's Caspian province

NICOSIA (R) — A tremor measuring 4.4 on the open-ended Richter scale shook parts of Iran's Caspian province of Gilan Friday, six months after the area was devastated by a major earthquake. The Iranian News Agency IRNA said the quake struck at 7:34 a.m. (0404 GMT) and was centred 230 kilometres northwest of Tehran. It made no mention of damage or casualties. The area has been hit by dozens of tremors since the quake measuring 7.3 on the Richter scale killed 35,000 people in Gilan and neighbouring Zanjan province on June 21.

Tunisian news agency gets new chief

TUNIS (AP) — Ali Belarbi, a senior official of the information ministry, has been named to head the Tunisian Press Agency (TAP), an official source said. Belarbi replaces Abdallah Amami, who is leaving TAP to become chief of the newly created Agency of External Communication, whose mission is to improve the exchange of information about Tunisia abroad, the source said. Belarbi, 52, has served as chief cabinet officer of the Information Ministry since March. He has a doctorate in sociology and has worked in radio and national television.

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

16:30	Damascus (RJ)
16:25	Aqaba (RJ)
16:20	Doha (RJ)
16:15	New Delhi (RJ)
16:10	Beirut (ME)
16:05	Bahrain (GF)
16:00	Cairo (MS)
15:55	Cario (GF)
15:50	Colombo (RJ)
15:45	Abu Dhabi (RJ)
15:40	Riyadh (RJ)
15:35	Alger (RJ)
15:30	Montreal, New York (RJ)
15:25	Damascus, Paris (AF)
15:20	London (RJ)
15:15	Frankfurt (RJ)
15:10	Madrid (RJ)

Upper/lower price in \$ per kg

Apples	600/500

<tbl_r cells

NEWS IN BRIEF
Researchers
into rioting
local food
industries

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At least 100 Jordanian women peace activists Friday stage a sit-in at the United Nations offices in Shmeisani to protest the seizure of the peace ship (photo Yousef Al 'Allan)

Women peace activists protest seizure of peace ship in Gulf

Gulf to starve them.

The Jordanian women organisations, the memo said, strongly deplore the interception and seizure of the peace ship and call on peace-loving nations and world organisations to help provide essential supplies to the innocent people of Iraq.

It said that while the Americans were trying to starve Iraq, the Israeli authorities were allowed and encouraged to commit atrocities on the people of the occupied Palestinian lands.

The memorandum said that the ICRC and the United Nations bore serious responsibilities in this matter and they should exercise their influence with the concerned governments to allow the peace ship to continue its trip peacefully to Iraq.

U.S. marines landed on the peace ship Ben Khaldoun by helicopter firing warning shots and throwing smoke grenades in a bid to control the women and children on board, according to reports.

They called on peace-loving nations to support the current moves to provide assistance to the Iraqi people and children.

The memorandum, a copy of which will be sent to the U.N. secretary general, voiced solidarity with the Iraqi women and children in the face of the ongoing attempts on the part of the multinational force in the

requirements and needs before arrangements can be made for further supplies and shipments from Japan.

Hadid briefed the Japanese deputy on Jordan's operations to provide relief and humanitarian services to the Iraqi Red Crescent Society.

Abu Qura, who arrived Thursday in Baghdad, said in a press statement that he would hold talks with Iraqi officials and will examine Iraq's needs of medicines and children food supplies to promote dispatches of these items through the JNRCS.

According to a JNRCS official, Dr. Ahmad Abu Qura who is also chairman of the standing commission of the Red Cross

was deeply satisfied with JNRCS's arrangements for securing the safe dispatch of such humanitarian supplies to the Iraqi people through the Iraqi Red Crescent Society.

Okita said that his country was well informed about the joint JNRCS's arrangements for securing the safe dispatch of such humanitarian supplies to the Iraqi people through the Iraqi Red Crescent Society.

Okita told the meeting his country believed that close economic cooperation between Jordan and Syria was an essential step towards bolstering inter-Arab cooperation and integration.

Jubran described as strong and unique Jordanian-Syrian coordination of economic matters and industrial cooperation.

According to the Syrian minister, the joint Jordan-Syria Industry Company has been 80 to 90 per cent successful in implementing its projects in Jordan and Syria, and both countries were exerting further efforts to overcome obstacles impeding industrial progress and increase and expand bilateral cooperation in all domains, with special accent on industrial fields.

Absolutely no new initiative, Iraqi ambassador to EC says

By P.V. Vivekanand

Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Top-level meetings of Iraqi ambassadors last week were not aimed at crystallising any new initiative to break the deadlock in American-Iraqi contacts but were routine consultations between the Iraqi leadership and the envoys, according to Iraq's ambassador to the European Community (EC) headquarters in Brussels.

The ambassador, Zeid Hadid, who flew to Amman from Baghdad on his way back to Brussels Friday, said the Iraqi position remained firm that U.S. Secretary of State James Baker could visit Baghdad on Jan. 12 originally proposed by Baghdad.

"The Iraqi stand is always the same," Hadid told reporters. "The only thing Iraq asks for is negotiations, dialogue and relations between problems of the region... linkage between all the problems of the area."

The sudden recall of about 15 Iraqi ambassadors from various world capitals to Baghdad for meetings with President Saddam Hussein had raised speculation that Iraq could be preparing a fresh initiative to break the stalemate in efforts to resolve the

Gulf crisis.

"We are for a peaceful solution if possible, but it seems to us that since the beginning of the crisis the U.S. and President Bush are escalating the position day by day politically and militarily," Ambassador Hadid said. This "gives the impression that no doubt war is some metres far, no more," he added.

The ambassador, who arrived here along with his country's envoys to the Netherlands, Britain, India and Austria, said there was "absolutely" no new Iraqi initiative to break the deadlock.

Iraq has no intention to change the proposed date for a Baker visit to Baghdad and it is now up to the U.S. to act in response to the expressed Iraqi desire to have the secretary visit the Iraqi capital three days before the Jan. 15 deadline set by the United Nations Security Council for Iraq to leave Kuwait or face war, he said.

"They have given their ultimatum through the U.N. Security Council, which is no more than one American department," Hadid said. "We did not recognise this. We are still insisting on a dialogue for a peaceful solution on the same principle to reach peace and stability for all

the area, and first of all the Palestinian question," he added.

The U.S. government says that the proposed Jan. 12 meeting is too close to the U.N. deadline. It wants the Baker visit to be brought closer, before Jan. 3.

Starting a new life

By Stephen Nisbet
Reuter

BRUSSELS — Paul, a Romanian interpreter, boasted casually of how he had lied to Belgian Justice Ministry officials when claiming to be a refugee.

"I feel like starting a new life, so I came to Belgium and told them I had been beaten up by the miners," said Paul, in his 30s, referring to the street violence in Bucharest last June in which squads of miners attacked suspected government critics.

"But I'm not staying in Brussels. It's the most boring city in Europe. I'm off to Liege to get work," he said. The east Belgian city had the advantage of being near the Dutch and German frontiers that he need to disappear quickly.

People like Paul (not his real name) are giving European Community immigration authorities a headache as they contemplate a big influx of people from the former communist countries of Eastern Europe, coinciding with progress to the EC's frontier-free single market at the end of 1992.

The exodus could become a crisis if, as expected, the Soviet parliament passes a law in the next few weeks allowing its citizens to emigrate.

Soviet EC ambassador Vladimir Shemiatenkov said Moscow's labour experts expected two to three million Soviet citizens, from street sweepers to professional people, to head west in search of work.

The existing problem can be seen at Petit Chateau, a former army selection centre in a dingy, canalside neighbourhood of central Brussels, where Paul and 12,000 other current applicants for refugee status have their first brushes with authority.

Each day before dawn, dozens of people from around the world queue up to put their cases, hoping to persuade interviewers that they face persecution at home — or at least to string out official inquiries so they can prolong their stay.

One man in the queue, a Sikh

from India, showed a discolored foot which he said was the result of a police beating at home.

He said he had come to Europe on a cheap visa to Czechoslovakia, then paid \$500 to a taxi driver who brought him illegally to Belgium.

Belgian refugee commissioner Marc Bossuyt said only 17 per cent of applications succeeded and even then mostly because the applicant's story was given the benefit of the doubt.

Justice Minister Melchior Wathelet said the number of political asylum seekers was exploding throughout Europe and North America — from 25,000 in 1973 to an estimated 600,000 this year.

This trend, with 90 per cent of applications rejected, was putting at risk the very basis of the 1951 Geneva Convention for protecting genuine refugees, and also called into question general immigration policies. Wathelet said this month.

Romanians are the biggest single nationality among the 500 people crammed into Petit Chateau's dormitory living quarters. A thousand more would-be refugees are put up elsewhere in makeshift red cross accommodation.

With warnings from Moscow of massive Soviet emigration to the West in the near future, Europe's immigration planners face a dilemma.

If they crack down too hard on Paul and others like him, they may punish some people who genuinely are refugees and not simply economic migrants seeking a better material life.

They may also be tarred with the anti-immigration brush associated with far-right parties in some Western European states.

But if they are too lax, they risk seeing an ever-greater arrival rate which could end up fanning popular support for xenophobic parties.

A Liberian waiting outside Petit Chateau in the hope of being offered illegal casual labour said he was grateful to Belgium for offering him sanctuary, but his feelings varied by the day.

"Sometimes people look at you on a tram as though you're inconveniencing them just by being there. But then yesterday, a man gave away his coat to my friend because he was cold," he said.

mando tactics.

Abdul Rahim Abdul Qader told the Al Jouhouriya newspaper that 138,700 volunteers have been trained in special operations in the camp, some 150 kilometres south of Baghdad.

"The Najaf camp is ideal in training combatants who symbolise heroism and discipline," he told the daily.

The analysts said the volunteers are probably receiving training in commando missions to be launched behind the lines of the multinational forces.

The Baath Party said Friday that millions of poor and oppressed Arab and Muslims would rise up alongside Baghdad in any war against foreign troops.

The Baath Party daily Al Thawra said in an editorial that U.S. President George Bush was boasting like a "peacock" about the armies he had massed against Iraq.

The analysts said the training includes suicidal missions by sea and airborne operations.

A senior Baath party official said Thursday that thousands of volunteers had finished courses at a military camp in Najaf where they received special training on weapons and com-

mando tactics.

Abdul Rahim Abdul Qader appealed to Israel's supreme court Thursday to overturn an army order to expel them from the occupied Gaza Strip.

The expulsion order appealed Thursday was condemned by the U.N. Security Council last week in a resolution that also urged more protection for the Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza.

Missile

(Continued from page 1)

multinational forces if war breaks out, military analysts say.

Military analysts in Baghdad said Iraq was been training regular army commands and volunteers from the popular army in special operations against allied forces in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf.

The analysts said the training includes suicidal missions by sea and airborne operations.

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Terror

(Continued from page 1)

murders were welcomed, as heroes, the inevitable result is that more people want to be considered as heroes," he said.

In the occupied territories, Palestinians observed a general strike called by underground leaders to protest the mass immigration of Soviet Jews and the increasing settlement of Jews in Arab Jerusalem.

A Palestinian shot by Israeli troops in 1988 died of his wounds Thursday, hospital officials said.

Khalid Khader Mahmoud, 30, had been paralysed since he was wounded by a bullet in his spine.

He received treatment in Jordan but returned to the occupied West Bank Wednesday.

Israeli troops shot and wounded nine Palestinians during clashes in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip Thursday, Israel television said.

The army rounded up more activists of the Muslim fundamentalist movement Hamas in a crackdown which began two weeks ago when Hamas claimed responsibility for stabbing to

death three Israelis in Tel Aviv.

Four Hamas fundamentalists

appeared to Israel's supreme court Thursday to overturn an army order to expel them from the occupied Gaza Strip.

The expulsion order appealed

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Egypt's first woman is a 'hands-on social worker'

By Mimi Mann
The Associated Press

CAIRO — It took Suzanne Mubarak a year after her husband became president to decide what kind of first lady she wanted to be. Then she accepted the challenge of an American protestant.

The Brussels newspaper Le Soir reported earlier this month a police raid on a slum flat occupied by 40 Polish squatters who were in Belgium illegally.

The newspaper, not noted for sensationalism, said Pimps found a supply of prostitutes at Petit Chateau among the Ghanaians who make up another large group which traditionally seeks — usually unsuccessfully

— to obtain refugee status in Belgium.

For eight years, she has worked among her country's poor to bring education and hope to impoverished children. Mrs. Mubarak describes herself as a "hands-on social worker."

She has done the job largely without fanfare, opening schools and small libraries, obtaining medical supplies and hospitals for those without them. Much of her attention is focused on eradicating illiteracy, which afflicts more than half the 55 million Egyptians.

"I go to the most depressed area, the most depressed school, the most depressed hospital," she said, "but I don't get depressed. When I see what's been done, the smiles of the children, if you can solve the worst case, surely the rest will follow."

If they crack down too hard on Paul and others like him, they may punish some people who genuinely are refugees and not simply economic migrants seeking a better material life.

They may also be tarred with the anti-immigration brush associated with far-right parties in some Western European states.

But if they are too lax, they risk seeing an ever-greater arrival rate which could end up fanning popular support for xenophobic parties.

A Liberian waiting outside Petit Chateau in the hope of being offered illegal casual labour said he was grateful to Belgium for offering him sanctuary, but his feelings varied by the day.

"People say I'm shy, but I don't think so," she said. "I would say I'm just a bit timid."

To the outside world, and most

Egyptians, Mrs. Mubarak is a low-profile figure as the flamboyant John Sisko had done. Still, Mrs. Mubarak often compares well.

She is not a doting mother in Cairo's government newsmen, her predecessor.

They have addressed many of the same problems, relating to the state of women, education, overpopulation and poverty.

"We're both Egyptians, so if we do things differently, it's a matter of style," Mrs. Mubarak said. "The problems we've tried

to solve are still with us."

"I can't work in big crowds, in the heat," she said. "When I cut a ribbon at a school, I've been there 20 times before, improving the building, buying the books, training the teachers, talking with the children and visiting parents in their homes. It's a project I created with the help of private donations."

Jeanne Sadat was known as an advocate of women's rights in a male-dominated region.

In Mrs. Mubarak's view, "at the moment there are enough laws on the books of Egypt that give women equal rights, but women have to know how to use them. It's a social and educational challenge."

When her husband became president in 1981 after Sadat's assassination, "it took me one full year to find in myself what was right for me as first lady," Mrs. Mubarak said.

Suzanne Thabet, daughter of an Egyptian doctor and a Welsh nurse, was 17 when she married Capt. Hosni Mubarak, an air force flight instructor.

"He was so handsome," said Mrs. Mubarak. "He still is."

For 10 years, she kept to the traditional role of housewife and mother to sons Akila and Gamal.

"It was very difficult, because there were so many wars," she said. "My husband was always gone. I gave my life to the boys."

The day came when both were in school and Mrs. Mubarak asked herself: "What do I do now?"

Relatives and friends counseled cooking or sewing classes, but "I hate those things."

She enrolled in American University in Cairo. In 1977, when her husband was vice president, she graduated in political science with a minor in psychology. She earned a Master's in sociology in 1982.

The first lady and her women volunteers now care for 15 schools and expect to add more.

Some of Egypt's problems are so huge that the person cannot solve them, she said, but being first lady lets her try and rewards her when she succeeds.



Christmas in a refugee camp

By George Jahn
The Associated Press

TRAISKIRCHEN, Austria — The Magolas and Pasca families are celebrating Christmas this year in a dingy refugee camp, far from friends and family. They wouldn't want it any other way.

"I'd rather die than go back," Mariana Adriana Pascu said, when asked if she would miss traditional festivities in her former home of Sibiu, Romania. Her twin sister and 7-year-old son nodded their assent.

The Traiskirchen camp was first used for refugees fleeing the violent suppression of Hungary's revolt against communism in 1956. Thousands fleeing the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have passed through it since. The Austrian government picks up its costs.

Miss Magola appeared comfortable with the sordid surroundings as she and her 19-year-old mother, Sofia, sat on their camp cot, occasionally nudging the stray cat they had adopted.

Past fears and present anxieties faded as the 21-year-old fashion designer spoke basically of the future.

Forgetting the past

"I want to forget my past," Natalia Magola said of Christmases in Lvov, the Western Ukrainian city of Crumbling Majesty she and her mother left behind. "I want to think only of the future."

A movie star

"I'd like to go to the United States or maybe Canada," Miss Magola said. "I'm a good dancer. Maybe I can make videos

and become a movie star."

Her mother's aspirations were even simpler.

"I will be happy when my daughter is happy," she said with a smile.

The slow thaw in the Soviet Union did not satisfy the Magolas, fervent Greek Catholics whose religion is struggling to re-establish itself in the Western Ukraine after decades of brutal suppression.

They arrived in Traiskirchen May 13 after jumping the train that was supposed to take them to Yugoslavia for a vacation. Now they wait for Austria to formally recognise them as refugees and hope for a new life in North America.

Miss Magola appeared comfortable with the sordid surroundings as she and her 19-year-old mother, Sofia, sat on their camp cot, occasionally nudging the stray cat they had adopted.

Past fears and present anxieties faded as the 21-year-old fashion designer spoke basically of the future.

"We sat down at the table, and all of the family made the sign of the cross," she related, her eyes aglow. "Then we had our traditional meal of vegetables and buckwheat, and we prayed and sang religious songs."

"Such things never happened in Romania," her mother said. "We often had a hard time finding enough to eat at Christmas, and whoever heard of children getting gifts at school?"

"We don't know what the future holds, but it's bound to be better than the past."

"We thought the future looked bright after Ceausescu," Mrs. Pascu said. "We thought we would lots to eat. Now the situation is catastrophic at home."

The 33-year-old divorcee and her sister, a gym teacher, came to Austria in February, fleeing

what they said was post-revolutionary chaos and the growing conviction that nothing had changed at home.

Mrs. Pascu's sister said she believes that Ceausescu's feared Securitate secret police are still in power. Calls home indicate that the shortage of basic consumer items has not subsided, she said.

The Pascu family has been turned down once by Austria for immigrant status and is appealing.

Man. United delighted with Robson's comeback

LONDON (R) — Bryan Robson's form since his comeback for Manchester United has astounded manager Alex Ferguson.

The 33-year-old former England World Cup captain played only his second match of an injury-plagued season Wednesday, when United beat Norwich 3-0, and produced a fine performance before being replaced 10 minutes from time.

Ferguson, whose sixth-placed side face Aston Villa in the English first division Saturday, said: "Bryan has been brilliant since his comeback."

"I never imagined he would be as good as he has been since he returned. We took him off only because he was feeling a bit tired."

Ferguson said the experienced midfielder, who has had two Achilles tendon operations since being forced to drop out of the World Cup finals in Italy, still had a vital role to play with United.

"Bryan has exceptional qualities and I'm looking to him as a natural leader to take us through the minefields we will encounter if we are to win the championship which is my intention," he said.

The United captain's contract expires at the end of this season but Ferguson said: "A lot of people might fancy him but I

want him at Old Trafford and I have no intention of dumping him."

Ferguson was awaiting a fitness test on winger Danny Wallace, who missed the Norwich game with a knee injury, before naming his side.

Experienced midfielder Jimmy Case and former England international defender Russell Osman are set to return for Southampton against Tottenham.

Case missed Wednesday's win over Manchester City with a back injury and Osman has been out for two games with a bad knee.

Norwich could be without three front men for their visit to Coventry, where they have won only once in the first division.

Dundee United hope to beat Scottish League leaders Glasgow Rangers Saturday to bring them within two points of the title holders.

Captain Maurice Malpas said: "It would be nice to win this game just to let them know we are still in there fighting. Traditionally, the team which does best around Christmas and New Year goes on to win the league."

Rangers' oldest rivals, Celtic, will be trying desperately to regain some credibility by beating Hearts.

Celtic are languishing in fifth place with 16 points, 11 fewer than Rangers and only three above bottom club St. Mirren.

Drivers gear up for Paris-Dakar Race

PARIS (AP) — More than 400 cars, trucks and motorcycles will start Saturday in the 13th Paris-to-Dakar Rally, but only about one-third are expected to finish on Jan. 17 in one of the world's toughest endurance races.

Ari Vatanen on Finland will be defending his title as the rally sets out from the Chateau de Vincennes outside Paris to Clermont-Ferrand in central France, the first of 13 stages.

A short four-kilometre prologue Sunday will determine the starting order when the rally begins in earnest on Jan. 2, with a leg starting in Tripoli, Libya,

over Wimbledon and England midfielder Steve Hodge is doubtful after suffering a recurrence of a calf injury.

City manager Peter Reid has three strikers with problems. Adrian Heath has a virus and is expected to recover in time but Wayne Clarke and Clive Allen are unlikely to be fit.

Derby hope that former England goalkeeper Peter Shilton will recover from knee and groin injuries to take over from deputy Martin Taylor against Everton.

Leeds will be without defender Peter Haddock against Wimbledon. Haddock was carried off at Sunderland last Sunday with ankle, calf and knee injuries although X-ray examinations showed no broken bones.

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All-German swimming team to get tough world championship baptism

LONDON (R) — German swimmers take their first world championship plunge as a united team in the new year but will not pack the all-round power of the days when the country was divided.

East Germany swamped the rest in women's swimming for the best part of two decades. The system, which derived the glory, devoted everything to nurturing the talent but fell apart with the collapse of the former Communist state.

November's first all-German championships left East German women's swimmers looking a largely spent force, with once all-conquering stars reduced to demoralised also-rans as they floundered out of contention for tickets to the world championships in Perth, Australia.

East Germany's extraordinary through system sized up talent from infancy and extracted every ounce of potential from world-beaters of the stamp of Kornelia Ender, sprinter supreme of the 1970s, and Kristin Otto, winner of six gold medals at the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

Deprived of this support, the endless opportunity for training and the material comforts and incentives which went with success, eastern Germans will no longer exert the sort of monopoly which enabled them to carry off 13 of the 16 women's titles at the last world championships in Madrid in 1986.

Allegations that drugs were used to enhance performance have cast further shadow and prompted the National Swimming Federation to demand all German competitors at the World Championships sign sworn statements they are drug-free.

However, Germans will certainly make their mark at the 11-day gala of swimming, diving, water polo and synchronised

swimming at the sixth World Championships which start next Thursday.

The incomparable Michael Gross returns to the international arena for the first time since the Seoul Olympics with every chance of becoming the first swimmer to win three consecutive individual world titles when he unfurls his powers in the 200 metres butterfly.

Gross first made his towering presence felt at the 1982 World Championships in Guayaquil, Ecuador, when he won the 200 freestyle and 200 butterfly golds — a feat he repeated for West Germany in Madrid four years later.

This time, at 26, he swims just butterfly. He showed superb form in winning last month's German national titles at 100 and 200 metres when barely over 20s.

The great eastern German men's hope is Nils Rudolph, who made his big breakthrough in 1990, setting world-best times for short-course 50 metres freestyle and long-course 50 metres butterfly — each at the expense of U.S. kingpin Matt Biondi.

Olympic 200 metres individual medley champion Daniels Hutter, European 200 freestyle Gold medalist Manuela Steinbach and Grit Mueller, a European bronze medalist, should keep the eastern Germans among the women's medals.

But their former team mates Heike Friedrich and Astrid Strauss — both reigning freestyle world champions — and European 400 and 800 freestyle gold medalist Anke Moehring flopped in the German championships and failed to earn a pass to Australia.

However, all three would have been hard-pressed to upstage Janet Evans, the diminutive American who splashed to three Olympic tides — 400 and 800 metres freestyle and 400

individual medley — in Seoul two years ago.

Team mate Biondi, who had second thoughts after announcing his retirement from swimming at the end of the Seoul Olympics, returns to lead the U.S. men's challenge.

Biondi, Olympic champion at 50 and 100 metres freestyle and silver medalist over 100 metres butterfly, aims to reassess his authority in all three events and will be favourite to retain his world 100 freestyle crown.

The 50 freestyle promises a particularly potent clash, with Rudolph and American defending world champion Tom Jager racing Biondi in the chase for gold.

At the other end of the distance scale, Australian Glen Housman should attack Vladimir Salnikov's seven-year-old 1,500 metres world record, having been denied it a year ago by a technical timing hitch.

Britain's Adrian Moorhouse — Olympic, European and Commonwealth champion — aims for the one major title missing from his collection after the 1986 world 100 metres breaststroke gold was snatched from his grasp by disqualification for faulty kick at the turn.

The first three days of the championships feature diving, synchronised swimming and water polo but the pace quickens with the innovation of a "sprint day" to open the swimming programme in the Perth Superdrome.

It comprises 50-metre sprints in butterfly, backstroke and breaststroke and 4X50 freestyle relays for both men and women, but is not an official part of the World Championships.

For devotees of long-distance racing, a rest day in the swimming programme offers a 25-kilometre swim in Perth's Swan River.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY DECEMBER 29, 1990

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Except for taking chances with a certain property or asset this is a good day to think out problems in a logical and intelligent manner and to renew within yourself a greater amount of proven principles.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Take care you think big in some financial matters so you can increase your abundance but later some time to enjoy yourself with close friends.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You now can attend to any obligations and have a good whack what is best in your dealings with others early after which you can be with friends.

Taurus: (April 20 to May 20) A partner is easily willing to come to a new agreement with you that can make your joint undertakings much easier to handle, then be careful later.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Whatever private worries bother you can be settled early in the day by concentrating on them then you can get off to visits with friends.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Open up that desire that means so much to you to a very good friend and you will find that he responds and aids you to get what means the most to you.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) The day finds you able to contact that influential person who is able to give you some valuable assistance after which do work required.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Some new arrangements and conditions can be most helpful to you after which you are able to enjoy and delight in the intimate things you yearn for.

THE BETTER HALF.

By Harris

HARRIS 12-3



"Do you really think you'll be a better kisser if you put your lips in curlers overnight?"

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Bob Lee

RIBBE

CLATH

BURPAT

WUNSIE

WHERE THE SNOSIE LIVED.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: IN

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumble: HEAVY JUICE WEASEL SWIVEL

Answer: What there was in the courthouse—MORE "JAN" THAN LAW

THE Daily Crossword

by Henry Selzinger

ACROSS

1 Ticket ends

6 Roman soldier

12 Divided

14 Glamour photo

15 Ben

16 Scratch out

17 Fighting

18 Cappuccino

19 Coffee

20 Start of a Churchill quote

23 Net

24 Oar

25 More of quote

31 Validator

34 Actor Schoder

35 "Low Grant"

36 Epoch

37 Standard payment

38 Defence

40 Inventor's monogram

41 Ravine kin

43 Toddler

45 More of quote

48 Comic Lew old

52 Sort of suff.

53 Hyson or cooing

54 End of quote

58 Fur scarf

61 Pang

62 Double Miltie

63 Emoter

64 Egret

65 Hustler

66 Evil

67 Embrace

68 Having jagged edges

69 Annealed

70 Society entrant

71 Cow call

72 Big app.

73 Traffic artery

74 Hoarded

75 Numerical suffix

76 Heavy book

77 Sheet

78 Govt. landing

79 Donkey

80 Damon or Koppel

81 STARS

82 STARS

83 STARS

84 STARS

85 STARS

86 STARS

87 STARS

88 STARS

89 STARS

90 STARS

91 STARS

92 STARS

93 STARS

Economy

Deepening U.S. recession nudges manufacturing sector into depression

WASHINGTON (R) — Orders for expensive manufactured goods plunged a record 10.5 per cent in November, the Commerce Department said Thursday, showing that as the U.S. economy slides deeper into recession, manufacturing seems closer to a depression.

The unexpectedly severe decline in orders for durable goods matched a record drop in January this year, the biggest since record-keeping began in 1958.

Transport industries suffered the most, but no U.S. industry was spared. Every manufacturing sector — from defence to computers — had less business in November than in October.

But in a report Thursday, the head of the joint economic committee of Congress said the lower interest rates were merely a

deep recession. It was getting worse in the fourth quarter. There is no end in sight," said Allen Sinai, chief economist for Boston Co. in New York.

Durable goods, items like cars and refrigerators meant to last three years or more, are the backbone of domestic manufacturing and closely monitored as a measure of the economy's health.

Faced with an official recession after eight years of growth, the nation's central bank, the Federal Reserve, has been pushing down interest rates.

But in a report Thursday, the head of the joint economic committee of Congress said the lower interest rates were merely a

beginning and must fall further to combat the economic slump effectively.

The plummeting orders in November surprised Wall Street economists, none of whom had anticipated such a severe drop.

The decline was more than triple the 3.1 per cent loss economists had forecast.

By comparison, orders rose 3.6 per cent in October.

Some unique factors did affect the November report, particularly a 27.4 per cent skid in transport orders that reflected sharp production cutbacks in the final three months of this year.

Transport orders rose 14.1 per cent in October.

And new aircraft orders were down 38.8 per cent from October, when leading manufacturer Boeing Co. received a flood of multi-billion dollar orders.

He had expected the GNP to contract for the final quarter of the year at an annual rate of three to four per cent. But now, he said, "five per cent is not out of bounds, the way the economy is sliding."

But even excluding transport items, durable goods orders fell 3.5 per cent last month after declining 0.2 per cent in October.

"There aren't any bright factors in 1991 either," he said.

The market has suffered from high interest rates, sluggish corporate profit growth, high oil prices in a country that imports virtually all its oil, jitters over the Gulf crisis, and concern over politics in the Soviet Union.

Friday's close contrasts sharply with 1989, when the Nikkei finished at a record 38,915.87,

Tokyo stocks end year lower, tumbling 38.7 per cent in 1990

TOKYO (R) — In a grim reminder of one of the Tokyo stock market's worst years ever, share prices ended 1990 the way they began — lower.

Friday's fall brought the total decline in the key Nikkei stock average over the year to nearly 40 per cent.

"The realisation that this year was a bad one all came out in the end," said Masahiko Tsuyuzaki, a trader at Tachibana Securities Co. Ltd.

The Nikkei stock average fell 91.99 points, or 0.36 per cent, to 23,848.71 at midday Friday, the end of the last session for the year.

The market will reopen for another half-day session Jan. 4 before normal trading resumes Jan. 7.

It was the first time the Nikkei failed to end the year higher since 1986, and the decline betrayed brokers' fragile hopes that the average would close above

24,000 points to provide a psychological boost for next year.

When people saw the Nikkei wasn't going to close above 24,000, they sold," Tachibana's Tsuyuzaki said.

World News

JORDAN TIMES, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1990

Shekhar, Sikh leader to discuss Punjab India moves soldiers into Kashmir capital

SRINAGAR (R) — Several hundred Indian soldiers were sent into the streets of Srinagar Friday and a curfew was imposed to fail demonstrations called by Kashmiri militants fighting to be rid of Indian rule.

Officials said similar round-the-clock curfews were imposed on most other towns in the Kashmir Valley, the centre of a year-old rebellion against India.

The streets of Srinagar, summer capital of India's only Muslim-majority state, were deserted and police reported little trouble, saying heavy morning rain helped the security forces.

They reported only one death, that of a young suspected militant shot while fleeing house-to-house searches by soldiers and paramilitary police. Police said an AK-47 assault rifle was found near his body.

The curfew was imposed Friday morning after two outlawed militant groups called on people to take to the streets in protest against what they alleged was torture of prisoners by security forces.

Allegations of torture and arbitrary killings of suspects later reported as deaths during encounters with militants are ripe in the Kashmir Valley.

The valley's hereditary chief priest, Mirwaz Omar Farooq,

telephoned a statement of protest to Srinagar reporters condemning the curfew, which prevented Muslims praying on the issue, Singh said.

About 2,000 people have been killed in the uprising this year in a campaign that has virtually halted the economy of the valley, which is largely dependent on tourism.

Meanwhile, Chandrab Sekhar, India's prime minister for just seven weeks, scheduled talks with powerful Sikh leader Simranjit Singh Mann Friday in hopes of finding a way to end a decade-old separatist campaign in Punjab.

The talks, the first between an Indian leader and a single Sikh representative in more than five years, were set for Friday evening, Mann spokesman Mander Singh told Reuters.

He said Mann had finally received a letter from Shekhar inviting him for talks. Mann had refused to meet the Indian leader without an official invitation.

Singh said Mann's mandate from fellow Sikhs leaders was "self-determination" for the Sikhs, who are a majority in the rich agricultural northern state where militants are waging a campaign for an independent homeland they call Khalistan (land of the pure).

Self-determination could mean either independence or greater autonomy and Mann wanted a referendum in Punjab on the issue, Singh said.

Both sides were uncertain about what might come out of the talks. "We're all guessing," said Singh. Official spokesmen had no comment.

There was little optimism in the press.

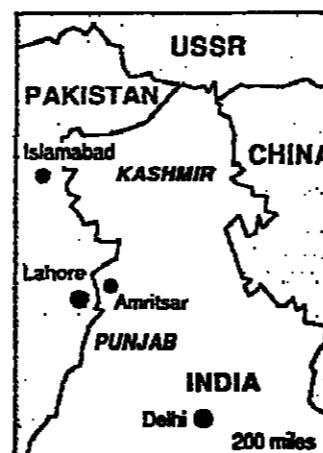
"There have been so many false starts during efforts to solve the Punjab problem that few people will entertain any high hopes about the proposed talks," The Statesman newspaper said in an editorial.

Mann, a former senior policeman, and Shekhar are to meet at the end of one of the bloodiest years in Punjab, where police have reported more than 3,800 deaths in the militant campaign, more than double the official toll for last year.

The only serious note of optimism came from The Tribune newspaper, based in the Punjab capital Chandigarh.

"That such a meeting is taking place at all is a phenomenal achievement indicating a qualitative improvement in the situation," it said in an editorial.

The talks were made possible by a meeting of all factions of the Sikh Akali Dal Party Wednes-



China removes minister of police

PEKING (R) — Chinese Premier Li Peng removed his minister for public security Friday and diplomats said his departure seemed linked with the failure of police to control student protests and catch political fugitives last year.

Wang Fang, 70, had also failed to stop a rising wave of crime which has led to thousands of executions.

The official New China News Agency said Wang was replaced by 55-year-old Tao Siju, a vice minister of public security who joined the Communist Party at the age of 14.

Wang submitted his resignation and Premier Li proposed the changes to the standing committee of China's parliament which approved them, the agency said. It gave no reasons.

Diplomats said Wang had effectively been out of office since last March because of ill health and political reasons.

The main cause of his dismissal seemed to be the inability of his forces to stop waves of students marching from their campuses to Tiananmen Square in April of last year.

"He did not cover himself with glory. In the interests of stability they waited a while before dismissing him," a Western diplomat said.

But, diplomats added, it was the obvious split in the party leadership which allowed the protests to gather momentum.

Even after the army crushed the demonstrations in June, 1989, prominent dissidents and student leaders such as Chai Ling and Wu'erkaixi evaded security forces and fled the country to form opposition groups in exile. "This was severely embarrassing," another diplomat said.

Wang's dismissal follows the sacking last February of the four top leaders of the powerful People's Armed Police, a separate force from the Public Security Ministry.

Wang, who took office in 1987, was generally regarded as a hardliner. But he also had close ties to Zhao Ziyang, the reformist party leader who was removed after the 1989 crackdown.

Under Wang's tenure, China witnessed a soaring crime rate.

What officials described as a "serious smashing campaign launched this year resulted in the executions of hundreds, possibly thousands of people."

The human rights organisation Amnesty International said in September that the 1,100 people it knew had been sentenced to death over the previous 12 months were the "tip of the iceberg."

Wang's predecessor, Ruan Chongwu, was dismissed after an earlier wave of student pro-democracy protests.

The New China News Agency reported that 66-year-old Zheng Toubin was replaced as foreign trade minister after five years in office by Li Lanqing, 58, formerly his vice minister and a Russian and English speaker.

Kaifu to reshuffle cabinet today

TOKYO (R) — Japanese Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu agreed with ruling party leaders that he will reshuffle his cabinet Saturday in an apparent move to strengthen his standing.

"We have solved many pending issues, so we agreed to do this (reshuffle)," Ichiro Ozawa, secretary-general of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), told a news conference after meeting Kaifu Friday.

The issues Ozawa referred to were the government budget, to be formally announced Saturday, and the adoption of a party platform to reform Japan's uniquely electoral system.

Parliamentary sources said the reshuffle did not signal any major changes in Kaifu's domestic or foreign policy, although he may appoint a new foreign minister.

Finance Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto is expected to be retained because he has responsibility for next year's budget.

Government legislation for the expected 70.35 trillion yen (\$32 billion) budget for the year starting in April will be submitted to parliament in January.

Kaifu is likely to move Justice Minister Seiichi Kajiyama, who came under attack both at home and abroad for racial remarks.

Kajiyama, during a recent tour of Tokyo's seedy Shinjuku district, said blacks and prostitutes destroyed good neighbourhoods.

Kaifu has been reluctant to replace members of his cabinet, saying he faced major foreign and domestic issues.

But LDP bosses, eager to give posts to their subordinates, had been pressing for a reshuffle before the end of the year, the parliamentary sources said.

The prime minister's popularity has fallen from midsummer highs, partly because of an inability to push through policy proposals on the Gulf crisis.

Kaifu's poll rating now stands at about 45 per cent, down from about 63 per cent in July.

Without strong public support Kaifu, who rose to power from a tiny faction within the LDP, lacks the power to manoeuvre against party bosses such as former Premier Noboru Takeshita and former Finance Minister Michio Watanabe.

IRA ends Christmas truce; leader urges peace steps

DUBLIN (R) — As the IRA ended a Christmas truce, the leader of its political wing called on Britain and Ireland to take the next step towards peace in Northern Ireland.

Just 20 minutes after a short-lived ceasefire expired Thursday, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) resumed its guerrilla campaign with a gun attack on British soldiers at a border checkpoint. Nobody was hurt.

Then two policemen were slightly injured by a bomb thrown at a Belfast police station.

Irish Prime Minister Charles Haughey and Britain's Northern Ireland Minister Peter Brooke had both warmly welcomed the IRA's three-day truce, the first it had declared publicly since 1974, as a possible glimmer of hope for the future.

19 killed in continued Sri Lankan fighting

COLOMBO (AP) — Tamil Tiger rebels ambushed soldiers clearing land mines Friday in eastern Sri Lanka, killing at least 10 people, military officials said.

The dead included five soldiers, one policeman and four Sinhalese civilians, said the officials who cannot be identified under briefing rules.

The ambush took place at 7:30 a.m. (0200 GMT) in Bakmitiyawa village when the soldiers were busy with the daily task of checking roads for land mines and booby traps, the officials said.

Details of the attack were not immediately available from the remote village in Ampara district, 200 kilometres east of Colombo.

Three militants were killed in two separate incidents in the north and the east, the officials said without giving details.

They said three more guerrillas were killed in Elephant Pass near a military camp that has been under attack since Sunday.

Bangladesh politicians agree not to trade abuse

DHAKA (R) — Bangladesh's normally vociferous politicians have agreed not to trade abuse in the run up to Feb. 27 parliamentary elections.

"The decision to refrain from making provocative remarks so that the elections can be held peacefully was reached at a meeting of three political alliances," a senior political leader said.

Wang's dismissal follows the sacking last February of the four top leaders of the powerful People's Armed Police, a separate force from the Public Security Ministry.

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The New China News Agency reported that 66-year-old Zheng Toubin was replaced as foreign trade minister after five years in office by Li Lanqing, 58, formerly his vice minister and a Russian and English speaker.

He said the meeting Thursday night, headed by Mir Shakwati Ali, Dhaka branch leader of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), urged political workers

"to remain respectful to democratic behaviours and avoid pasting posters of one party on that of another."

The meeting followed reports that BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia and her main rival for power, Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina, had made scathing references to each other at recent election rallies.

"We must maintain unity and understanding for peaceful holding of the election with a spirit that bound us together in forcing former President Hossain Mohammad Ershad from nearly nine years of autocratic power," one leader told reporters.

Ershad, a former general who seized power in a 1982 military

coup, resigned and handed over power to Acting President Shahabuddin Ahmad on Dec. 6 after a violent campaign by opposition parties, students and others.

Ershad, now in detention in a private villa, was formally charged Thursday with abuse of power and corruption.

Ahmad, a former chief justice, said after taking office that his main job was to hold free and impartial elections to restore democracy in this South Asian country of 110 million of the world's poorest people.

He had ordered a two-week amnesty, which expired Wednesday, for illegal arms to be surrendered. Those who failed to surrender their arms faced penalties of up to life imprisonment, he said.

Police seized a number of illegal arms from the home of Ershad last week.

But they said only about 100 arms and a small quantity of ammunition had been surrendered within the amnesty deadline.

However, the Interior Ministry said in a statement Thursday night that more than 500 firearms had been seized in raids during the two-week period.

Former Romanian king wants to return

GENEVA (R) — Former King Michael of Romania, deposed by expulsion from his native land, said Friday he wants to return to Romania as a free citizen and would like to become its constitutional monarch once more.

Michael, 69, was kicked out of Romania Wednesday only 12 hours after he had arrived on a private Christmas trip to visit his ancestors' graves.

The former monarch, who has been living in exile since the Communists forced him from the throne in 1947, charged in a statement distributed by his press office that the authorities had flagrantly violated his human rights during this week's

visit.

But his statement added: "This new obstruction will not be able to change the unalterable desire of His Majesty King Michael to enter in a trip as a free citizen of this country, without any constraint."

Michael has criticised Romania's leaders as being former Communists, little changed from dictator Nicolae Ceausescu whom they overthrew a year ago.

The government had also prevented him from making an earlier visit last April, saying it was too close to national elections in May, but had said he would be welcome to visit after the polls.

Michael stated that he had made it clear to the Romanian authorities before travelling to Bucharest that he would stay clear of political affairs.

Nonetheless he showed in his statement that he still believes in the pre-Communist constitution of 1923, which provides for a king alongside a parliament, to be the legitimate one.

"His Majesty King Michael remains faithful to his oath made to the Romanian nation. He declares himself ready to serve the cause of the Romanian people above political interests or groups, in conformity with the prerogatives which are given him by the legitimate constitution of Romania," his statement said.

Memphis, Tennessee (AP) —

Country entertainers Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson are joining forces to develop a club where they can perform from time to time. The club, to be called "Waylon And Willie's Cafe," will be on the city's Mud Island Tourist Park which is undergoing renovation as a companion project to the Great American Pyramid. The pyramid, a 32-story, stainless steel structure, is scheduled to open next summer. Mud Island, a struggling nearby tourist park, is being refurbished to become "festival island." The island and pyramid, though both owned by local government, will be run by private companies controlled by businessman Sidney Shlenker.

Jennings said the club plan with Nelson will perform there several times a year, but he didn't say exactly how many. Mud Island is a three-mile-long (5-kilometre) sandbar in the Mississippi River. Most of the island is being developed as residential property.

Flights were proceeding normally Friday morning, including two international arrivals from Lisbon.

Deputy Foreign Minister Venancio da Mota, who inspected the damage, made no comment and refused to speculate on who was responsible.

UNITA and Angola's ruling MPLA-PT (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola-Labour Party) have held five rounds of peace talks. A sixth session is due to be held in Lisbon in January.

UNITA's radio, the Voice of the Resistance of the Black Cockrel, made no mention of the airport blast in its morning broadcast.



Tom Cruise marries Nicole Kidman

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Tom Cruise married Nicole Kidman, his co-star in Days Of Thunder, in a private ceremony in a Colorado ski resort. Few details about the Christmas Eve wedding were disclosed, but Cruise's spokeswoman, Andrea Jaffe, said a handful of family members witnessed the 30-minute civil ceremony. Honeymoon plans weren't disclosed. It was the first marriage for the Australian actor and the second for Cruise, whose nearly three-year marriage to actress Mimi Rogers ended in divorce in January.

Cruise, 28, met Miss Kidman, 23, while filming Days Of Thunder. The couple are in pre-production for their next film together, The Irish Story, directed by Ron Howard.

Thai thieves leave no signs

BANGKOK (R) — An unusual series of highway robberies in northeast Thailand has left motorists scratching their heads. Thieves have been making off with traffic signs to sell as scrap metal, according to a report in Friday's Bangkok Post. Apparently the aluminum alloy used to make the signs can fetch 40-50 baht (about \$2) from scrap merchants.

Two militants swallowed cyanide pills after being injured in fighting in the eastern town of Pottuvil and a third died of bullet wounds, the officials, who cannot be identified under briefing rules.

Three militants were killed in two separate incidents in the north and the east, the officials said without giving details.

They said three more guerrillas were killed in Elephant Pass near a military camp that has been under attack since Sunday.

Los Angeles (R) — Police reinforcements will be out in Los Angeles on New Year's Eve to discourage people from firing guns into the air to celebrate 1991, police said. "Every year, on Jan. 2, we count bullets that come back down to the ground," assistant police chief Robert Vernon said. "Unfortunately, we count some of these bullets in people." "We are going to blanket the city with police," he added. Gun shops in Los Angeles have been banned from selling ammunition for a week before the New Year holiday.

Billboard posters urge people not to fire their guns on New Year's Eve. In one of the worst outbreaks of firing on New Year's Eve, Los Angeles police had 1,247 reports of gunfire in

1988.

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